



Maricopa County

News Release

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INFLUENZA SEASON 2003

Phoenix -- Sixty-seven confirmed cases of influenza have been reported to Maricopa County Department of Public Health this season.

Maricopa County Department of Public Health monitors influenza rates on a weekly basis at 10 emergency departments in area hospitals, 20 health care centers, 6 long-term care centers, 15 schools and at ASU.

Everyone is at risk of contracting influenza, especially when it is widespread in the community. Those at high-risk include: all people aged 65 or older, people with chronic diseases, residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities, caretakers of high-risk individuals, women who will be more than 3 months pregnant during the influenza season, and homeless persons.

Often, children have symptoms that are not as prominent as these in adults. Parents should take common sense precautions such as making sure family members wash hands frequently and observe children for flu-like symptoms. Parents with ill children or adults who are ill should contact their medical providers for assistance. Sick children and adults should remain at home and not attend work or school or visit other public places.

Respiratory illnesses, such as influenza, are spread by coughing and sneezing and by not washing hands. The Public Health Department recommends covering noses and mouths when sneezing and making a concerted effort to wash hands to prevent further spread of influenza.

It's not too late in the season to be immunized against influenza. For vaccination locations and times, call 602-263-8856. The Centers for Disease Control recommends that the following groups be immunized: persons 50 years of age and older, residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities, adults and children 6 months of age and older who have other health conditions or are on aspirin therapy, women who will be more than 3 months pregnant during the influenza season, people who work in health care facilities and health care workers, and household contacts of people in high risk groups.

For more information about influenza, visit www.cdc.gov and <http://www.hs.state.az.us/phs/oids/epi/flu/index.htm>.

Maricopa County statistics can be found at www.maricopa.gov/public_health/epi/flu.asp.

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Most people who get influenza recover completely within 1-2 weeks but influenza can cause more severe and life-threatening complications such as pneumonia, particularly in children, elderly people and other vulnerable groups.

How is influenza spread?

Influenza is spread when someone with the virus sneezes, coughs, or even talks. The virus is expelled in the air and may be inhaled by anyone nearby.

Symptoms

Include: fever, chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headache, muscle aches, and fatigue.

Treatment

The best treatment for influenza is bed rest. Also, stay at home, drink plenty of fluids, sponge down with tepid water if you are hot, take symptom relief medication to help with fever, aches and pains, consult your physician, and avoid over-exertion when you are experiencing symptoms.

Prevention and Control

A person can reduce their chance of getting influenza by receiving an annual influenza vaccination. This vaccine is specifically recommended for people who are at high-risk for developing serious complications as a result of the influenza infection.

This vaccine is made each year so that the vaccine can contain influenza viruses that are expected to cause illness that year.

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